

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, TH

SUBJ: LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

REF: BANGKOK 10529

SUMMARY: IN A DISCUSSION THAT CONTINUED FOR SEVERAL HOURS DURING TWO MEETINGS, THE CONFEDERATION OF LABOR UNIONS OF THAILAND (CLUT) DECIDED TO REJECT NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) OFFERS TO JOIN IN LABOR DAY CELEBRATIONS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 1 AT PUMPINI PARK. IN TURNING DOWN THE NSCT PROPOSAL, CLUT ALSO REJECTED THE NSCT OFFER TO FINANCE THE PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STATE ENTERPRISE UNIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE METROPOLITAN WATER WORKERS UNION LED BY VOCAL AROM PHONGPHAGAN, OPPOSED STUDENT PARTICIPATION POINTING OUT THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF LABOR AND STUDENTS DO NOT ALWAYS COINCIDE. SEVERAL PRIVATE INDUSTRY UNION SPOKESMEN, PRIMARILY IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY UNIONS, MANY OF WHICH HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED WITH THE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF STUDENT GROUPS, SAID THE

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STUDENTS, AS TRADITIONAL SUPPORTERS OF WORKERS,

SHOULD BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

2. ENCOURAGED BY PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOT'S PROMISE TO APPEAR AT THE LABOR DAY GATHERING, TENTATIVE AGREEMENT ON THE PART OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE 200,000 BAHT FOR THE PROGRAM, AS WELL AS PRO-LABOR PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY STATEMENT, CLUT PASSED UP THE NSCT OFFER TO BANKROLL THE EVENT. IN REPLYING TO THE NSCT REQUEST, CLUT LEADERSHIP INFORMED THE STUDENTS IT WAS A HOLIDAY TO HONOR LABOR AND AS A RESULT THE CELEBRATION AT LUMPINI PARK WOULD BE STAGED BY THE LABOR UNIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, CLUT ENCOURAGED STUDENTS TO HOLD THEIR OWN CELEBRATION ELSEWHERE IF THEY DESIRED. AT THIS POINT, BOTH THE NSCT AND THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF THAILAND (SPT) ARE PLANNING TO DO SO WITH THE NSCT SCHEDULING AN EXHIBIT AND LECTURES AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY AND SPT A DEBATE AT PARTY HEADQUARTERS.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH MORE CONSERVATIVE LABOR LEADERS REJECTED STUDENT OVERTURES OUT OF OPPOSITION TO STUDENT POLITICAL VIEWS, A STRONGER REASON THE NSCT PROPOSAL WAS REFUSED LIES IN THE PATRONIZING ATTITUDE OF STUDENT LEADERS TOWARD LABOR AND THEIR TENDENCY TO RUN THE SHOW ONCE THEY BECOME INVOLVED. CLUT LEADERSHIP WAS QUITE PROUD OF THE FACT IT DIRECTED LAST JANUARY'S QUOTE RICE STRIKE UNQUOTE WITHOUT STUDENT ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE. IT HOPES TO BE JUST AS SUCCESSFUL IN ARRANGING THE 1976 LABOR DAY CELEBRATION. WHITEHOUSE

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